

REMARKS:

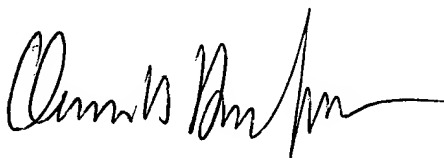
Applicant's arguments concerning the patentability of claims 1 — 10 and 12 were not considered by Examiner because they were felt by Examiner to raise new issues after final. Applicant herewith submits a Request for Continuing Examination to allow these claims to be considered. Since there is a final office action pending, and the statutory period has not yet expired, submission of a RCE is believed to be proper.

In this RCE, as a preliminary amendment, assuming the entry of the amendment of August 11, claims previously withdrawn (14-16; 18-29) are hereby cancelled, without prejudice to their possible patentability. Claims 11, 13 and 17 are now described as previously presented.

Examiner has previously found claims 11, 13, and 17 to be allowable if amended to be in independent form, as they are here. It is applicant's belief that claims 1-10 and 12, as presently pending, and in light of the arguments previously presented, will also be found by Examiner to be allowable, thereby allowing all of these claims to issue in a single patent. Passage of the pending claims to issue is respectfully requested.

Applicant's representative has not previously handled this exact situation, and is not completely confident as to whether the extension of time fee required is that for two months, as seems to be indicated in the communication of Sept. 15 (period of reply is listed as four months from 4/13/2004, implying two months is due), or should be for three months (possibly minus the fee for one month). Accordingly, representative is establishing a deposit account concurrently with this response, and is paying herewith the fee at the rate for three months to ensure a filing date. Any deficit or excess should be charged to or refunded to said as-yet-unnumbered deposit account.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis H Kirkpatrick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Francis H Kirkpatrick

Reg. # 35,219

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